[*Translation*]

Uniform Rates for Natural Gas

*620. SHRI VILASRAO NAGNATH RAO GUNDEWAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to have uniform rates for natural gas throughout the country:

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) to (c). The basis price of natural gas at well-head/landfall point has been fixed at Rs. 1550 per 1000 cubic metres with effect from 1.1.1992. An additional Rs. 850 per 1000 cu. metres is charged along the HBJ pipeline. For the North-Eastern States there is a concessional price of Rs. 1000 per 1000 cubic metres with a further discount of Rs. 400 per 1000 cubic metres on a case to case basis. In addition to the basic price, consumers have to pay transportation charges which vary from unit to unit.

[*English*]

Off-Shore Structures in Cauvery Basin

*621. SHRI P. P. KALIAPERUMAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the development of the offshore structures in the Cauvery basin is slow:

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken to speed up the work?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) to (c). Exploratory drilling commenced in the off-shore Cauvery area in 1977. 42 exploratory wells have been drilled over 19 prospects. 2 small and marginal oil and gas discoveries, PY-1 and PH-9 were made in July, 1980 and August 1981 respectively. The most prospective oil bearing structure, PY-3 was discovered in August, 1988. A block comprising this oil field has been offered under the Fourth Round of Bidding to private Indian and foreign companies for exploration and exploitation.

Betel Leaf Crop

*622. DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether betel leaf farmers of West Bengal and Orissa are affected due to affliction of their crop by some disease;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to check this disease?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. As per information received from the Government of Orissa, disease incidence on Betelvines has been noticed in Jaleshwarpur and Bhograi areas of Balasore district; however, the Government of West Bengal have reported no serious incidence of disease on Betelvines.

(c) In the case of Orissa, a special campaign was launched in Balasore district for the control of Betelving disease by training, seminars and publicity on pest/disease management and treating affected vineyards with fungicides and supply of Plant Protection chemicals to the Betelving Growers.